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PRESS RELEASE

Specialists from U.S. Encourage Capital Market Players in Macedonia to Adopt Self-Regulation and Internal Control Mechanisms

Skopje – International experts visiting the Macedonian Stock Exchange are supporting the adoption of changes enabled by Macedonia's new securities law.

"Internal control mechanisms and self-regulation are essential if there is to be a modern and secure market," says Robert Strahota, former Assistant Director of the Office of International Affairs, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Strahota is joined by Krzysztof Grabowski, an advisor to the brokerage house BDM of Bank PKO BP, the largest universal commercial bank in Poland, who is also the former President of the Polish Association of Brokers and Investment Advisors and a Member of the Board of the European Centre for Financial Dispute Resolution. The two have been consulting with members of the Macedonian Stock Exchange and Central Securities Depository on internal control mechanisms and self-regulation. The two international experts are funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), part of the U.S. Mission to Macedonia.

The timing of their visit coincides with the passage of a new securities law. The new law, enacted last week, calls for practices that are in compliance with international and European standards and places a greater focus on strengthening the self-regulatory role of capital market players.

Increased self-regulation and proper disciplinary measures are expected to have a positive effect on preventing misconduct at brokerage houses, and to encourage more transparent and fair trading practices at the Stock Exchange, according to the visiting specialists. Ultimately, they say, these measures will enable better protection of domestic and foreign investors and increase their confidence in the Macedonian financial system.

The experts will also conduct a workshop with Macedonian brokers and staff of the Exchange and Securities Depository on these topics. The visit of the experts and the workshop was organized by USAID's Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC).

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$400 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 30 projects worth \$35 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit www.USAID.org.mk.